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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 1 August 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

It is with deep regret and strongest condemnation that I must inform you that, despite the efforts made for and the assurances given regarding the 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire that was jointly announced last night by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and United States Secretary of State John Kerry, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued with its killing spree against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip, killing today more than 130 people, including many children and women. At least 28 more bodies have been recovered from under the rubble of Palestinian homes, adding to the escalating death toll.

Although the ceasefire was to go into effect today, 1 August, at 8.00 a.m. (Palestine time), the situation on the ground has further unravelled, as the Israeli occupying forces have persisted with the wanton killing of civilians and the destruction of civilian homes and properties, in particular in the south of Gaza in Rafah and Khan Younis, and the Israeli Government has issued threats of more "crushing" reprisals. Among those murdered today by the occupying forces were nine people, all from the same family (Al-Farra family), who were killed in their home in Khan Younis by Israeli tank shelling. Just hours after the above took place, the occupying Power declared that the ceasefire was effectively over due to the claimed capture of an Israeli occupying soldier in Gaza. Here it must be noted that, even after the occupying Power declared the ceasefire to be over, the Palestinian side, in its entirety, reaffirmed its respect for the ceasefire and President Mahmoud Abbas reaffirmed his commitment to dispatch a delegation representing all Palestinians to head to Cairo to engage in discussions to negotiate a durable, comprehensive ceasefire to bring an end to this horrific violence and to lift the siege of Gaza and address the longstanding, underlying causes of the current crisis.

As of today, it is estimated that over 1,600 Palestinians have been killed and over 8,700 have been injured by the Israeli occupying forces using all means of

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lethal weaponry and warfare. This shocking number of deaths does not even take into account the entire figure of those killed today in Rafah, as many remain trapped in the rubble of what were their homes. As has been the case with all past Israeli attacks against the defenceless and occupied Palestinian people in Gaza, large numbers of those killed continue to be women, children and elderly persons. Although the numbers are constantly rising, current estimates are that nearly 25 per cent of those killed in this Israeli offensive have been children, at least 12 per cent have been women and more than 60 elderly persons have been killed.

Each day that passes without an end to this barbaric Israeli aggression results in more loss of Palestinian life, more suffering and more irreversible trauma inflicted on our people. We therefore reiterate, with utmost urgency, our appeal for international protection to be provided for the Palestinian civilian population, who in Gaza are living under inhuman circumstances, with no clean water, no electricity, shortages of food, medical equipment and supplies and nowhere being safe from the Israeli onslaught. Hospitals have reached a breaking point, functioning on generators with electricity reduced to two hours a day in small parts of Gaza and zero hours a day in most parts. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools have reached capacity, with more than 250,000 displaced Palestinian civilians sheltering in an estimated 90 schools, a number that is four times higher than the peak number of displaced persons in the Israeli aggression of 2008-2009. Moreover, that number does not include the other hundreds of thousands of other civilians displaced from their homes, with the total number now reaching over 460,000 people, a quarter of Gaza's population. Morgues in Gaza are also filled to capacity, are over-stretched and have been inundated with bodies now laying on the floors.

The massive losses and destruction inflicted by the occupying Power have caused the dramatic deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, which has been declared a disaster area by the Palestinian leadership. In this regard, we must further underscore the urgent messages conveyed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Valerie Amos, and by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Pierre Krahenbuhl, in their comprehensive briefings to the Security Council on 31 July 2014 regarding this grave humanitarian crisis and their appeals for the protection of civilians, respect for international humanitarian law and the provision of the necessary humanitarian aid to our besieged population in Gaza, which is becoming more vulnerable by the minute and suffering so immensely.

Below is a list of just a small fraction of the multiple grave violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, many of them amounting to war crimes, which we are compelled to convey to you, since our last letter, dated 30 July 2014. We will continue to keep you informed of the escalating situation on the ground once information becomes available in order to more fully document these crimes against our people.

1 August 2014:

- 9 Palestinians of one family were killed and 16 others were injured in shelling targeting the Al-Farra family house in Khan Younis. Among the dead are: Abdulmalik Abdulsalam al-Farra (age 54), his son Usama Abdulmalik al-Farra (age 34), Imad Abdulhafiz al-Farra (age 28), Awatef Izz al-Din al-Farra (age 29), Muhammad Mahmoud al-Farra (age 12), Lujain Bassem al-Farra

(age 4), Yara Abdulsalam al-Farra (age 8), and Nadine Mahmoud al-Farra, and later Abdulrahman al-Farra (age 8) was pronounced dead when he succumbed to wounds he sustained during the shelling.

- At least 130 Palestinians have been killed today since the collapse of the ceasefire in intense shelling of Rafah by the Israeli occupying forces, including the perpetration of massacres in Rafah, where a one-ton bomb was dropped on a densely populated civilian area, and dozens more people have been killed in airstrikes and shelling of other areas.
- An Israeli airstrike hit an ambulance and killed a paramedic, Atef Zamili, and wounded seven passengers. Zamili's death brings to 16 the number of medical personnel who have been killed in Israeli strikes since the beginning of the assault 25 days ago. Moreover, this is thirteenth ambulance to be targeted in an Israeli attack.

31 July:

- Fadel Nader al-Mughazi, 27, was killed when Israeli occupying force warplanes targeted a motorcycle in eastern Rafah.
- Five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli occupying force artillery attack that targeted a group of people in the town of Abasan, south-east of Khan Younis. Among the dead were Naji Abu Mustafa, Hani Abu Mustafa, Ashraf Abu Tuaima, disabled Falastenie Abu Tuaima, and Mohammed Fuad Khamis al-Najjar.
- Adham Siyam, a child, died of his wounds, which he sustained in an Israeli bombing on Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, a few days ago.
- Aref Barakah (age 58) was killed as an Israeli occupying force artillery shell hit his house in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.
- A 23-year-old mother, Maha Abu-Helal, was killed, and her husband and two children were injured, when Israeli bombardment targeted her house in Rafah in the morning hours.
- Baraa Ibrahim (age 19) died of his wounds, sustained in an attack on Al-Nusseirat refugee camp.
- Ahmad Loah (age 22) died of his wounds, which he sustained in earlier Israeli shelling, while being treated at a hospital.

30 July 2014:

- An Israeli assault on the market in the Al-Shujaiya area, east of Gaza City, killed at least 17 Palestinians and injured scores of others. The assault was carried out during the period of the supposed humanitarian ceasefire on Wednesday.
- The attack on Al-Shujaiya killed three journalists — Mohammed Daher, Sameh Al-Aryan and Rami Rayyan — and killed a paramedic. In total, at least 11 journalists have been killed in Israeli strikes and bombings since the start of the aggression.

Moreover, today, 1 August, several civilian protests took place in the West Bank, in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the besieged Gaza Strip, including in the city of Al-Khalil, where thousands of people took part in protests. As has been the case throughout the years of occupation, the occupying forces used indiscriminate, excessive lethal force that resulted in the killing and injury of more Palestinian civilians. In the city of Tulkarem in the northern West Bank, a young man, Tamer Faraj Smour, age 22, was killed by the occupying forces, and in the village of Safa, north-west of Ramallah, Odai Nafez Jabr, age 19, was killed by live fire from the occupying forces. More than 90 Palestinians in Al-Khalil alone were injured by Israeli use of live ammunition.

Israeli measures of collective punishment against the population have also continued in the West Bank, including the ongoing arrest and detention of Palestinian civilians in military raids. Israeli settler terror and violence have also persisted in this climate of aggression and hatred fomented by the Israeli Government. In this regard, on 31 July, several Israeli settlers attacked and attempted to kidnap a Palestinian youth while he was on his way to work in the village of Deir Yasin, west of Jerusalem. Ali Al-Abassi (age 21) said that settlers beat him up and pepper-sprayed his face and tied him with a rope, attempting to kidnap him. He was able to free himself from the settlers, after a failed attempt to force him in their car.

The current situation throughout the occupied State of Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip, is beyond grave. On our part, the Palestinian leadership continues to call for respect of the 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire, with the aim of bringing an end to the slaughter of our people and an end to this crisis. The Palestinian side on all fronts is committed to the ceasefire and demands that Israel, the occupying Power, respect its commitments. In this regard, we call for all efforts to be exerted in the context of the talks planned in Cairo, through the good offices of Egypt, to immediately and concretely address the catastrophic situation in Gaza and achieve a permanent and durable ceasefire. In support of this effort and in an urgent appeal for reprieve for gravely suffering people in Gaza, we urge all members of the international community to contribute to helping solidify the 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire, which could allow for desperately needed aid to reach the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza and allow for the necessary space to deal with the far deeper-rooted issues that have for too long been ignored, with such far-reaching and disastrous consequences for so many innocent people.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 513 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 30 July 2014 (A/ES-10/646-S/2014/551), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations